



The Compassionate Friends

South Bay/LA Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

A NEWSLETTER FOR BEREAVED PARENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

March 2026 ISSUE

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"This newsletter is sponsored by an anonymous family in memory of our children".

OUR NEXT MEETING:
will be March 5th, the First *Thursday*
of the month at 7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: use this one
The Neighborhood Church
415 Paseo Del Mar
Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274
(South of Torrance Beach)

DIRECTIONS: Pacific Coast Hwy. to Palos Verdes Blvd. → Palos Verdes Blvd. becomes Palos Verdes Drive West. Veer Right. → Go to Via Corta (stop sign just past Malaga Cove Plaza). Turn right. → Go down hill to Arroyo (stop sign). Turn right. → Continue down hill to end of street. → Turn left on Paseo Del Mar. → Park In EAST lot. Follow path to back patio. Meetings are held at the **EAST** end of the church. Patio Meeting room is 101 classroom. Follow signs. (Last door, first floor.)

--Please remember to park in the EAST church parking lot and not on the street.--

The Compassionate Friends Mission Statement...

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

The March 5th meeting will start with "**Grief and Our Fluctuating life.**"

To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccia79@gmail.com for the link.

The TCF Friday Lunch Group offers you a place to talk about your grief every Friday from 1-3. We meet at different locations each week so call to let us know you are coming. Everyone pays for their own lunch so arrival times & locations are flexible. Please call (310) 963-4646 for more information.

For a free Picture Button of your child, call Connie at (310) 292-5381.

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The **Thursday March 5th** meeting will start with **"Grief and Our Fluctuating life."** Death changes us forever. We are becoming defined by who and what we have lost. We all learn and change and grow as we get older. Our values and capacity to love and hurt and take risks evolve. Maybe we would have been a different type of person if we hadn't suffered this tremendous loss... Who knows? But, after the enormous loss of a child or sibling, of course we are forever changed. We question everything because an inner force motivates us to move forward. We are forced to question and learn from this tragedy. We try to make some sense out of our fluctuating life. As the shock wears off and we trudge through the grief process, we take an inner look at who we truly are.

Self-awareness and soul-searching allows us to reevaluate our prior intact life, and now, the life that lies ahead of us. This newsletter will have insights into what other bereaved parents have struggled with, and have come to terms with in their own grief journeys. By sharing their stories we hope you will see how alternative thoughts and aspects, can help you find an easier time with your own changing life.

Some Days Are Just Hard

Posted on October 8th, 2024

Losing a child is indescribably painful. As any bereaved parent will tell you, the death of a child leaves a huge line running through our lives with "before and after" etched forever in our memories. Days that were previously filled with promise and vitality suddenly seem empty and hopeless. Gradually, we come to accept that our lives will never return to what they once were and that some days are just hard.

In October 2010, we lost our previously healthy 21-year-old son, Matthew, to a form of virulent strep. What initially masked itself as a severe case of pneumonia was, in fact, a form of strep that attacked his bicuspid aortic heart valve, necessitating valve replacement surgery. But when they actually went in, they found the damage was far more extensive than they thought. And while Matthew survived the surgery (mostly due to his youth), he never regained consciousness. He spent the last week of his life in a coma before he died on October 22nd.

Before that ill-fated day in October, I had never known such sadness and hurt. As anyone who has lost a child will tell you, the pain is simultaneously acute and chronic. It's so piercing and constant you can hardly breathe; it's as if a cement block has been permanently placed on your chest. You don't think it will ever go away. Grieving becomes a way of coping with the tremendous loss that now makes up your life. And while the jagged edges of my own grief have begun to smooth out a bit, I also know that it will always be with me and forever define my family.

One thing I've come to accept over the past two and a half years is that some days are just hard. During the first year, I came to fully expect that every day would be hard. Those early days slogged by at a surreal pace. Grief was ever-present and seemed to hold time at bay. As

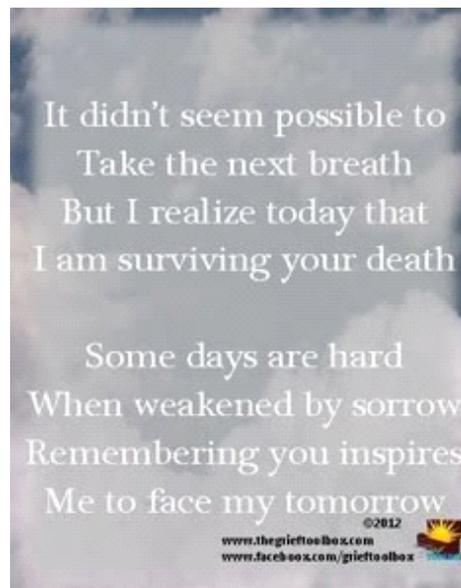
we approached the first anniversary of Matthew's death in 2011, things shifted a bit, time picked up, and the acute days of grieving became less frequent, although the chronic grief remains.

Now I notice that there's no anticipating when grief will sneak up and wash over me like a rogue wave. It just happens. It can be a song, a special place, a type of food, or just a memory that suddenly slides into my subconscious, and all I can think about is the tremendous hole that now fills my life. I can be having coffee with a friend and laughing

one minute, and find my eyes filling with tears the next. And that's okay. In fact, it just brings Matthew closer to me for that moment.

I think for bereaved parents, our grief lies just below the surface. Even when I'm laughing or absorbed in a conversation, if you were to scratch me just a little bit, my grief would come bubbling up. I've come to view grief not as the enemy, but rather as an emotion that I now can acknowledge and move into. I know eventually, she'll go back under and I'll just carry her around with me, hidden from other's view, but always there.

In the movie "Rabbit Hole", there's a scene between Nicole Kidman (Becca) and her mother, Dianne Wiest (Nat), that stayed with me long after the closing credits. Becca and Nat are bereaved parents, and while Becca sees their circumstances as completely different (her four-year-old son was



killed in an accident, while her brother died of a drug overdose), she and her mother now share the commonality of being bereaved mothers:

Becca: Does it ever go away?

Nat: No, I don't think it does. Not for me, it hasn't, and that's going on 11 years. It changes, though.

Becca: How?

Nat: I don't know... the weight of it, I guess. At some point, it becomes bearable. It turns into something that you can crawl out from under and... carry around like a brick in your pocket. And you... you even forget it, for a while. But then you reach in for whatever reason and—there it is. Oh right, that. Which could be awful—but not all the time. It's kinda... not that you like it exactly, but it's what you have instead of your son, so you don't wanna let go of it either. So you carry it around. And it doesn't go away, which is...

Becca: What?

Nat: Fine... actually.

This exchange sums up, for me, how so many of us carry the grief of losing our beloved children with us. I bring this up to remind people that for those of us who have lost a child, our grief is present, even if you don't see it. It doesn't go away, even with the passage of time. It doesn't go away even if we seem "better." With time the intense pain subsides, but our grief, like our love, is always there. And that's okay. The beauty of the human spirit is that we have a remarkable ability to continue on, even in the most adverse of conditions. But we will always mourn our children. We don't want them to be forgotten. Ever.

Our memories of them are all we have. Since Matthew died, I've learned that you do begin to put your life back together again, bit-by-bit, piece-by-piece. Its form is different, but it is still a life. It continues to have shape and meaning. And part of that new shape is formed by the memory of your loved one. That memory is present all the time, looking over your shoulder, helping you restructure this new reality. Grief is transformational. My grief has changed me in ways I'm only just beginning to understand. I am more mindful of things, big and small, happy and sad. I don't take anything for granted. I've learned to embrace the paradox of unfathomable loss and profound gratitude for living. I continue to feel Matthew's presence as we all rebuild our lives without his physical body here.

Some days are just hard. Some days grief rises up and reminds me that she's still there. She reminds me that grieving Matthew will always be a

pivotal part of my life. That's okay. I also know that I will move through it and feel better soon. I know that life continues on, almost with a renewed sense of purpose. And for that I'm grateful. I've come to embrace yet another paradox of life, knowing that our hearts can be both full and broken at the same time.

--Robin Gaphni Robin and her husband, Israel, live on Bainbridge Island, Washington

Grief: When Does it Stop Hurting?

Grief reminds one of the few things that has the power to silence us. It is a whisper in the world and a clamor within. More than sex, more than faith, even more than its usher death, grief is unspoken, publicly ignored except for those moments at the funeral, that are over too quickly, or the conversations among those of us who recognize in one another a kindred chasm deep in the center of who we are.

Maybe we do not speak of it because death will mark us all sooner or later. Maybe it is unspoken because grief is only the first part of it. After a time it becomes less sharp, but larger, to a more enduring thing called loss. Perhaps that is why this is the least explored passage: because it has no end.

The world loves closure, loves a thing that can, as they say, be gotten through. This is why it comes as a great surprise to find that loss is forever, that two decades after the event there are those occasions when something in you cries out at the continual presence of an absence. The landscape of our lives becomes as full of craters as the surface of the moon. We are defined by who we have lost.

--by Anna Quindlen Pulitzer prize winning columnist

Parents: When the Couldas, Shouldas, and Wouldas Intrude on Grief

Brandon was the first to call me mom. His death was the rebirth of my new life. I never woulda thought losing a child would find its way into my life. All 8lbs 10oz. of Brandon Michael laid in my arms. My heart was smitten with love for this boy instantaneously. In my mind's eye I could see my plans for him. A sweet baby, a good student, a



hard worker, and a well adjusted adult... an adult that would outlive me. But an addict? Never was that in my plan. I had absolutely no experience with addiction.

The dreaded wouldas appeared in the teenage years. I never woulda thought addiction would come to know my boy. Endless nights of not knowing where Brandon was, wondering if he was ok when phone rang at 2 a.m., pacing the living room at 3 a.m.: "Should I make some calls to see if he can be found?" I was sick with worry, guilt, and fear. What did I do wrong? And then that call came, it was a police officer: "Is this Shari? Remain at home, again remain at home, we are sending a state patrol car to you." My world was about to change in the worst way a parent could imagine. Tears. Sobs. That same heart that was smitten with love was instantaneously beating outside of my body. "Please God don't let my boy be gone, please!" February 17, 2001 was the last day Brandon had breath on this earth. Not only was he gone, he was also the drunk driver.

It took me years to be able to say that my son lost his life to his own drunk driving. In my intense pain of grieving, shame crept in. I love this boy. He'd made me a mom. I began to wonder what other people would think if they knew he died by his own drunk driving? Would they say, "Well, what did you expect? He was driving drunk, he deserved death!" Then I began asking myself: "What if I woulda been a better mom, what if I coulda saved my marriage with his dad? What if I woulda known more about addiction... maybe I coulda loved him more and better." My deepest fear was that some people would think Brandon wasn't worthy of my grieving. I knew I could not tolerate the thought that my boy was not worthy of my grief. His death was the beginning of my rebirth. The journey began and continues today.

Admitting my guilt was one step toward a new life. Along with admission of guilt and recognition of my old friends shouda, woulda, and coulda, paved the way to freedom. I learned to love more deeply, and to sympathize with the pain of others. Most of all I learned to be free to know my boy was worthy of my shattered heart regardless of the stigmas surrounding addiction. I learned addiction is a thief of life. Brandon was not defined by his addiction, he was kind, he was smart, he looked out for the underdog, and he was gentle.

As parents, we are human. We love, we get angry, we say and do the wrong things and the right things, we make mistakes, and we love our

babies no matter what. Life is messy, painful, and beautiful... all rolled into one.

Take a minute, say hello to your shouldas your couldas, and your wouldas. Now, tell them, "Thanks for stoppin in". It's time to tell them goodbye, as your heart begins to remember you loved your child with everything in you! You did the best you could with the tools you had and the time you were given.

Dear ones please know your grief is love. You grieve because your heart also was smitten with love for that baby of yours, no matter how old they were when they left this life.

-- Shari Billington Busha

Ideas for Writing Your Story or Journal

Recently, several new TCF members have asked me for suggestions about what they can do at the early stages of grief and what helped me in my experience in those earlier days of grief when my son, Bobby, died. In thinking about that, I remember my journal and what a meaningful and effective way of venting that was for me. As you may know, very often our close friends think we should be "moving on with life" or "letting go," etc. Unfortunately, for me, they just didn't get it. So, I looked back through some past newsletter issues and found an article on ideas for writing your story or journal, I hope you find it helpful:

Bereaved parents who have written about their loss unanimously agree that writing unleashes enormous stress and pain. In my own experience, I recall one night when I locked myself in the bathroom and wrote a long letter to my son, Bobby. It was my chance to express my feelings without having them diminished by well meaning and caring people around me trying to be helpful. I will never forget the pressure that letter released for me. Although the letter was not saved, the positive result was everlasting. Have you ever thought of writing your story or keeping a journal? You may find it helpful to clarify your thoughts about your child by recording your feelings in the form of a letter.

Write a letter to your child, expressing your thoughts and feelings about the following:

- A special memory that I have about you.
- What I miss the most about you and our relationship.
- What I wish I'd said or hadn't said.



- What I'd like to ask you.
- What I wish we'd done or hadn't done.
- What I've had the hardest time dealing with.
- Ways in which you will continue to live on in me.
- Special ways I have for keeping my memories of you alive.

Choose one or several ideas that have significance for you or start at the top of the list and work your way down. These topics may serve to help you come up with your own ideas, specific to your situation and relationship. Give yourself this exercise as a gift. If you would like to share your writing at a TCF meeting, please do. You never know how many other parents will be touched and benefit from your experience.

-- Pat Akery, Chapter Leader, TCF, Medford, OR



St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17 because, according to legend, it marks the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. For many, Saint Patrick's Day is just a day to wear green and drink beer. There are Saint Patrick's Day parades across the U.S., and where I live, the San Antonio River is dyed green.

When he was a teenager, he was taken by Irish raiders and forced into slavery in Ireland. Several years later, he escaped. He was converted to Christianity and had a dream which convinced him to evangelize the Irish.

According to legend, Saint Patrick used the shamrock as a metaphor to explain the Holy Trinity to new Christians. The shamrock has one stem, but three leaves representing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

March 17th was thought to be the day of his death, hence the day of celebration of his life. This day occurred during Lent, and legend has it that the Irish would take this day off from Lenten sacrifices for celebration, leading to the modern celebrations on this day.

Saint Patrick's Day holds special meaning for me because it was my mother's birthday. She was proud of the Irish heritage in her family. My sister, Zee Ann, died in a car accident when she was three years old. This was the early 1950's, before

car seats and seat belts. She was thrown from the car. I was born four years after Zee Ann died, so I never knew her.

When I was young, I did not understand what it meant to lose a child. After I had children, I realized a love deeper than I ever thought possible and child loss was unimaginable. It was only after we lost our younger son, Will, to mental illness and suicide, that I knew fully the devastation and indescribable pain of losing a child.

When I was growing up, I would seek not just a birthday card, but a Saint Patrick's Day birthday card to give my mother, and was so pleased when I found one. I remember one of her birthdays in particular when I proudly presented her with the special card. That year, all she could manage was a thin smile and her eyes were far away and full of sorrow. I was disappointed and somewhat resentful at the time that she could not enjoy her birthday because of grief for Zee Ann. As I grew older, I, too mourned the loss of this beautiful sister that I never knew.

I recognize now that grief, especially grief from losing a child, pops up in waves when it will and stays till it is done. We can learn to live with this kind of grief, but it is a journey that is never really over. This year, a decade after my mother's death and a half a century after my sister Zee Ann's death, I will smile on Saint Patrick's Day with my remembrances of them, and rejoice that they are now celebrating their birthdays together. Again.

--Experts from Dr. Jan Patterson

Suicide

The power to suppress
 The pain and the loss
 The tears and the sadness
 The grief inside
 Lying there
 Dormant
 Sleep please, oh sleep
 The memories suppressed
 No power to deal
 With the pain that you caused
 The gap no one can fill
 Your selfish act
 Leaves me broken
 Afraid to love
 Afraid to live
 Through suppression I survive
 Suicide not only killed you

-- © Amanda Evans www.amandawrites.com

Guilt and Anger after a Stillbirth

It's not unusual for bereaved parents to become obsessed with their own, their partner's or their other children's health. Thoughts of death can become very prominent – if a tiny baby can die so can anyone. This reaction usually fades with time. But if it doesn't and you are struggling to manage your anxiety, talk to your doctor or health visitor.

With time, some parents also feel guilty when they start to feel a little better, as if they're not honoring their baby or 'forgetting them'. Grief can be a roller coaster of emotions and you may find yourself swinging between despair and hope. It is ok to look ahead, even quite early after your baby died, it doesn't undermine your feelings for your baby that has died.

Many women and birthing people feel responsible for what has happened. They feel they failed, that their body let them down and they didn't give birth to a healthy baby. Although this is a very common feeling, it is very rare for your baby's death to be linked to something you've done

Anger is a very natural part of grief. Many parents direct this towards the hospital, and at other times towards friends and family. For some people, it is a general anger at what feels like a very unfair situation. You may find yourself asking 'why me?'

All the feelings we mention here are uncomfortable but entirely normal. However, if you start to worry about how you're feeling, please try talking to your GP.

--babyloss@sands.org.uk

Newly Bereaved...

Pictures

I set them out. I put them away— get them out and start to go through them filled with wonder that the daughter pictured there is no longer going to call or walk in the door or send a card filled with love and humor. Cards that brightened my day and made me laugh and always prompted me to call her and give her a big hug when she walked in the door.

Pictures. I get them out. I run my hand over her face lingering on her lips remembering "kissy face mom." And suddenly overcome with grief pull that picture to me and I kiss her and tell her how much I love her and how very much I miss her—and then I look again, and see her

eyes—eyes that sparkled and twinkled with mischief though at times filled with deep reflection.

She was a sensitive intuitive young woman who possessed wisdom and insight much beyond her years. She "left us" when she was only 24.

Pictures. At times I hate them. They show me what I don't have. They bring back memories of a time when Jody was healthy and happy. A time when life with her was a joy. I am not yet to a place in my grief-healing where I can remember those times very well. I'm still filled with memories of her illness pain and death; and I'm still at the place that I want all of those horrible memories to be a bad dream, a dream that I will wake from hearing Jody's voice calling me to come outside so that we can take some... pictures.

--Patty Fallon

TCF, Central Oregon

Seasoned Grievors...

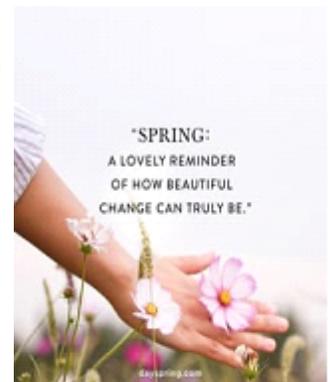
Out of Winter, Into Spring

In the dark of winter the skies are gray, the trees are bare, the grass is brown and all the world appears to be dead. Yet inside the branches of the barren trees and underneath the dormant grass, a silent happening is taking place. The seeds and juices of new life are moving within and underneath. It is a silent, slow process not seen with the eye until one day a tiny green leaf bud appears on a tree branch and another and another. Little grass blades begin to emerge out of the brown and seemingly lifeless ground. Again and again the leaves appear and the grass grows and thickens and a new world has emerged. We see patches of beautiful flowers in variations of bright colors, the birds come and nest in the trees, butterflies flutter about and we realize the miracle of a new season - Springtime.

Out of the long, cold, barren winter, a transformation has occurred. A new world has happened. One that is fresh and full of promise of new life a miracle.

The grief process is much like this. We feel barren and alone. Our world is cold and gray and we do not feel alive inside. Yet all the while, the grief work taking place in each of us is a transforming process; new life is silently at work within our inner being bringing forth a new life until we emerge as a new person in a new world.

It is a world quite different from our old world, for



we have survived through our suffering to our rebirth. No one ever said it would be easy. We cried. We hurt. We stumbled. We sometimes doubted and some of us cursed the darkness. Our grief season was long and hard but we told ourselves "this too shall pass". And so it did. And finally the springtime of our soul was created. Darkness gave way to sunshine; the bitter cold gave way to warmth. Desolation gave way to hope and we let go and embraced the new season of our soul.

A miracle happened.
--Connie Andrews

Friends and Family...

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me
And you start giving me advice,
You have not done what I asked.
When I ask you to listen to me
And you begin to tell me how I should feel
You are trampling on my feelings.
When I ask you to listen to me
And you feel you have to do something to solve my problems,
You have failed me, strange as that may seem.
Listen! All I ask is that you listen;
Not talk, nor do – just hear me.
And I can do for myself – I'm not helpless
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.
When you do something for me, that I can and need to do for myself,
You contribute to my fear and weakness.
But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel,
No matter how irrational
Then I quit trying to convince you
And can get about the business of understanding
What's behind this irrational feeling.
When that's clear,
The answers are obvious and I don't need advice.
Irrational feelings make sense when we
Understand what's behind them.
Perhaps that's why prayer works sometimes for some people;
Because
God is mute, and doesn't give advice to try to 'fix' things,
He/She just listens, and lets you work it out for yourself.
So please listen, and just hear me, and if you want

to talk,

Wait a minute for your turn,
And I'll listen to you.

Source: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mhcarer/docs/articlelisten/pdf>

Helpful Hint...



You don't get over a loss like this, you build a life around it. You carry the love and the ache in the same heart. Some days you move with strength. Other days you collapse under the weight of memory. And both are part of surviving something that changed everything.

--TCF Los Angeles Newsletter February/March '26

Welcome...



Attending your first meeting takes courage. We know this and it is always hard for us to say "welcome" because we are so very sorry for the reason which made you have to attend The Compassionate Friends (TCF) meeting. However, we are glad you found us. We cannot take away your pain, but we can offer our friendship, compassion, support, and hope. We ask only that you please try to attend at least three meetings before you make up your mind, "This isn't for me." With TCF, you'll have a chance to meet others who are making the same journey and you'll discover that special bond that occurs when you are with others who truly understand.

Book In Review...



TEAR SOUP: A Recipe for Healing After Loss, a story book by Pat Schwiebert and Chuck Deklyen. This book helps people understand healing after loss using a storybook form. Grandy has just suffered a great loss (which is not named) and in order to overcome her grief, she returns to the age-old custom of preparing Tear Soup from scratch in her kitchen. Tear Soup is a great book for healing from sorrow. The messages conveyed through the text are easily comprehensible by children 8 years and above, and comforting for adults who are looking for answers.

We were put on the earth to love them
for as long as We live...

Not for as ong as They lived.

–Alan Pederson

Our Butterflies

We are weary caterpillars
 Awash on life's tide.
 Little do we realize
 There's a butterfly inside.
 Our feet solidly on the ground
 The earth, it holds our eye.
 It's hard to imagine
 That one day we will fly.
 While we mourn our children's loss
 They fly freely up above.
 Floating free and peacefully
 On breezes of God's love.
 Their wings and iridescent glow.
 Their bodies are pure light.
 And somewhere choirs of angels sang
 The moment they took flight.
 They live in joy and happiness
 And peace we cannot know
 We can only bide our time
 And await our time to go.
 But one day we will join them
 And together we will fly.
 Then we will have forgotten
 We ever said good-bye.
 --Marilyn Futrell
 In memory of my son John Robert (J.R.) Woodfin



Hands

Little handprints in a frame,
 Flashback of memories days long gone,
 yet still so fresh in my mind as if only yesterday
 Tiny hand of my baby girl,
 Fingers curled around my own,
 Only a reflex to some,
 But not in mind,
 For me only the purest of loving connections.
 Outstretched toddler hand reaching out for mine.
 trusting mother's protective grasp,
 maneuvering the busy streets, we skipped
 together, hand-in-hand
 Slender-fingered teenage beauty, polished
 nails, smooth scented hands.
 Seeking independence, hands pushing me away,
 Sensing somehow her reluctance,
 Not ready, not quite yet...
 Hands of her adult years,
 I thought would have held mine as I navigated
 through the ageing years.
 Hands to comfort and hold, but never to be,
 I am left only with my memories,

and tiny handprints, in a frame...

--Cathy Seehuetter In memory of my daughter
 Nina TCF ST Paul, MN

Like Springtime

Like springtime, let me unfold and grow fresh and
 anew from this cocoon of grief that has been spun
 around me.

Help me face the harsh reality of sunshine and
 renewed life as my bones still creak from the winter
 of grief.

Life has dared to go on around me and, as I
 recover from the insult of life's continuance, I
 readjust my focus to include healing and growth as
 possibly in my future.

Give me strength to break out of the cocoon of my
 grief, but may I never forget it is the place where I
 grew my wings, becoming a new person because of
 my loss.

--Reprinted from Bereaved Parents/USA
 Newsletter, A Journey Together,
www.bereavementparentsusa.org

In March

The year moves on.
 Between the weeks and days
 are spaces filled
 with more than only time:
 those minutes, moments,
 when you life stands still
 and aches in memory...
 And part of you
 needs to endure the dark,
 because it means
 to have that love again.
 And part of you
 prays for forgetfulness,
 because your mind
 may break, remembering.
 Between the weeks and days
 are spaces filled
 with more than only time.
 ~Sascha Wagner

Tears are the safety valve of the heart
 when too much pressure is laid on it.

-- Albert Smith

**Our Children Remembered**

Troy Akasaka
Born: 1/91 Died: 2/15
Parents: Jay & Sharon
Akasaka

William Joseph Britton III
Born: 3/62 Died: 7/85
Mother: Jean Anne
Britton

John Francis Cleary
Born: 12/74 Died: 8/93
Mother: Pauline Cleary
Basil

Luke Edward Devlin
Born: 12/07 Died: 12/07
Parents: Jacqueline &
Tom Devlin

Angel Alva
Born: 12/91 Died: 6/24
Mother: Jackie
Alva-Ornelas

Larry Broks Jr.
Born: 7/88 Died: 9/17
Mother: Thessia
Carpenter

Matthew Hales Clifford
Born: 1/80 Died: 3/15
Parents: Bob & Melissa
Clifford

Nicolas Frank DiMarco
Born: 9/89 Died: 9/22
Father: Frank DiMarco

Josue
Born: 3/04 Died: 6/07
Mother: Elizabeth
Centeno

Scott Vincent Buehler
Born: 3/80 Died: 2/08
Mother: Elizabeth
Buehler Miller

Aaron Christopher
Cochran
Born: 11/90 Died: 9/12
Mother: Julia Carr

Allison Jeanine Kirkbride
Dewart
Born: 10/87 Died: 1/06
Parents: Z & Michael
Dewart

Brandon Armstrong
Miscarried: July 1995
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Julian Burns
Born: 12/18 Died: 1/19
Parents: Daniel & Marta
Burns

Tiffany Lamb Corkins
Born: 7/70 Died 8/05
Mother: Nancy Lamb

Ryan Dobie
Born: 7/92 Died: 2/19
Parents: Linda &
Douglas Dobie

Connor Aslay
Born: 5/99 Died: 7/18
Mother: Erin Aslay

Frank Christopher
Castania
Born: 8/94 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie
Castania, Grandparents:
Richard & Ann Leach

Hannah Elizabeth Cortez
Born: 9/92 Died: 7/13
Parents: Rafael & Shari
Cortez

Michael John Dornbach
Born: 7/60 Died: 10/17
Parents: Maria Triliegi &
Edward Dornbach

Jeremiah Bell
Born: 1/88 Died: 6/15
Mother: Angela Albarez

Vanessa Roseann
Castania
Born: 2/97 Died: 7/05
Parents: Frank & Debbie
Castania, Grandparents:
Richard & Ann Leach

Mike Sebastian Cortez
Born: 5/97 Died: 6/17
Mother: Rita Cortez

Wayne Douglas
Born: 9/71 Died: 1/10
Mother: Marie Galli

Scott Berkovitz
Born: 5/88 Died: 1/16
Parents: Carl Berkovitz &
Maria Moore

Carina Chandiramani
Born: 5/86 Died: 9/18
Mother: Norma
Chandiramani

Scott Curry
Born: 8/59 Died: 7/08
Mother: Marilyn Nemeth

Ramsay Downie, II
Born: 2/64 Died: 10/99
Parents: Ramsay & Sally
Downie

Noah Bernstein
Born: 6/87 Died: 2/17
Mother: Beth Bernstein

Blair Chapin
Born: 4/82 Died: 5/18
Sister: Elizabeth Chapin

Michael N. Daffin
Born: 2/85 Died: 4/17
Parents: Michael & Diana
Daffin

Joel Draper
Born: 1/84 Died: 5/2004
Mother: Tracy Solis

Cheianne Jayda Berry
Born: 12/01 Died: 7/16
Mother: Kristina Berry

Alexandra Chi
Born: 2/03 Died: 12/24
Father: David Chi
Parents

Daniel Elijah Day
Born: 4/93 Died: 5/16
Mother: Kristen Day

Brian Daniel Edelman
Born: 5/86 Died: 8/23
Father: Ray Edelman

Sam Boldissar
Born: 10/91 Died: 3/17
Parents: Jeeri & Frank
Boldissar

Michael Edward Clapp
Born: 2/93 Died: 4/18
Mother: Patti Clapp

Michael David Deboe
Born: 12/75 Died: 5/09
Parents: Dave & Judy
Deboe

Mark Edler
Born: 11/73 Died: 1/92
Parents: Kitty & Rich
Edler

Alex James Bonstein
Born: 11/91 Died: 7/16
Mother: Cynthia Sanchez

Tamara Lynette Boyd
Born: 12/65 Died: 12/00
Parents: Gloria & Gayle
Jones

Armand Del Campo
Born: 3/21 - 11/25
Mother: Angie Reed

Gregory Robert Ehrlich
Born: 4/91 Died: 2/19
Mother: Sarah Ott

Sean Michael Denhart
Born: 3/88 Died: 12/20
Mother: Janna Denhart

Lorian Tamara Elbert
Born: 5/66 Died: 10/07
Mother: Dorota Starr
Elbert

**Our Children****Remembered**

Bettina Mia Embry
Born: 8/65 Died: 4/22
Parents: Larry & Elena
Bruns

Mark Scott Galper
Born: 2/62 Died: 5/97
Mother: Sheri Waldstein

Taylor X. Hyland
Born: 8/06 Died: 7/20
Mother: Tessa Hyland

Chase King
Born: 4/87 Died: 11/19
Mother: Laura King

Jeffery Mark Engleman
Born: 6/61 Died: 2/10
Parents: Janette &
Laszlo Engelman

Lexie Rose Gilpin
Born: 4/09 Died: 4/09
Mother: Michele Gilpin

Steven Ishikawa
Born: 9/75 Died: 4/17
Mother: Miki Ishikawa

Colby Joshua Koenig
Born: 6/84 Died: 1/10
Parents: Cindy Tobis &
John Koenig

Richard Paul Engelman
Born: 02/66 Died: 03/95
Parents: Janette &
Laszlo Engelman

Steven Paul Giuliano
Born: 4/55 Died: 4/95
Mother: Eleanor Giuliano

Alexander John Jacobs
Born: 3/90 Died: 8/19
Mother: Diane Jacobs

Scott Koller
Born: 10/83 Died: 3/15
Mother: Betty Benson

Cody Jarod Esphorst
Born: 3/02 Died 7/19
Parents: Jesse & Julie
Esphorst

Marc David Guerreva
Born: 7/97 Died: 7/17
Mother: Sharon Cortez

Stefanie Jacobs
Born: 5/87 Died: 1/97
Father: Rob Jacobs

Keith Konopasek
Born: 1/63 Died: 7/95
Parents: Ken & Mary
Konopasek

Jesse Eric Esphorst
Born: 9/00 Died: 3/17
Parents: Jesse & Julie
Esphorst

Leslie Geraci Hart
Born 6/66 Died: 7/11
Father: John Geraci

Jason Christopher
Jenkins
Born: 4/86 Died: 11/20
Parents: Alvin & Caprice
Jenkins

Margareta Sol Kubitz
Born: 9/05 Died: 9/09
Parents: Maria & Bill
Kubitz

Chidinma Ezeani
Born: 8/89 Died: 10/19
Mother Ifeoma Ezeani

Christie Hagenburger
Born: 4/63 Died: 12/17
Father: D.W.
Hagenburger

Lizzie Jester
Born: 6/93 Died: 7/18
Father: Lee Jester

Michael Kropman
Born: 12/88 Died: 3/12
Parents: Brenda & Greg
Kropman

Robert Justin Fields
Born: 1/00 Died: 1/22
Parents: Loree & Bob
Fields

Bishop Michael
Hernandez
Born: 3/98 Died: 6/21
Father: John Hernandez

Zachary Hyun Joon
Jeong
Born: 12/24 Died: 12/24
Parents: Ken Jeong &
Cydne Shapiro

Cherese Mari Laulhere
Born: 9/74 Died: 3/96
Parents: Larry & Chris
Laulhere

Shawn Eric Fillion
Born: 12/82 Died: 8/21
Mother: Lise Fillion

Jesse Hernandez
Born: 2/90 Died: 11/22
Mother: Joann
Hernandez

Emily Matilda Kass
Born: 6/95 Died: 3/06
Mother: Susan Kass

Bryan Yutaka Lee
Born: 12/70 Died: 9/07
Mother: Kathee Lee

Michella Leanne
Matasso Fincannon
Born: 8/86 Died: 1/06
Parents: Bill & Cheryl
Matasso

Jennifer Nicole Hower
Born: 6/75 Died: 12/04
Brother: Jeff Hower

Jillian Nicole Katnic
Born: 3/87 Died: 10/18
Mother: Debbie Hughes

Steven J. Lee
Born: 1/63 Died: 10/06
Mother: Donna Lee

Bryce Patrick Fisher
Born: 10/86 Died: 8/21
Mother: Nancy Goodson

Rachel Suzanne Hoyt
Born: 2/70 Died: 1/95
Sister: Laura Hoyt
D'anna

Douglas Drennen Kay
Born: 3/72 Died: 9/06
Parents: Diane & Steve
Kay

Emma Nicole Lerner
Born: 11/99 Died: 7/06
Mother: Nancy Lerner

Miles Andrew Gallas
Born: 2/89 Died: 3/21
Mother: Denise Gallas

Sarah Jade Hurley
Born: 6/97 Died: 5/17
Father: Tim Hurley
Grandmother: Laurie
Hurley

Kathryn Anne Kelly
Born: 12/72 Died: 1/91
Parents: Dick & Timmy
Kelly

Kevin Le Nguyen
Born: 5/88 Died: 6/14
Mother: Tracy Le Nguyen

Joseph Licciardone
Born: 4/94 Died: 3/16
Parents: Connie & Leo
Licciardone



Our Children

Remembered

Gaby Lindeman
Born: 7/64 Died: 9/12
Parents: Gilberto &
Graciela Rodriguez

Blanca Isabel Meza
Born: 9/21 Died: 9/21
Mother: Angela Azurdin-
Meza

Edward W. Myricks II
Born: 4/72 Died: 10/11
Parents: Edward &
Sandra Myricks

Jessica Perez
Born: 5/89 Died: 10/03
Sister: Monica Perez

Joshua Lozon
Born: 6/91 Died: 6/21
Mother: Tracey Gentile

Mathew Scott Mikelson
Born: 4/77 Died: 4/20
Mother: Dorthy Mikelson

Lisa Nakamaru
Born: 12/93 Died: 10/14
Mother: Grace Nakamaru

Andrew Periaswamy
Born: 5/97 Died: 10/16
Parents: Megala & Xavier
Periaswamy

Richard Lee Luthe
Born: 11/76 Died: 1/98
Parents: Jeff & Lorraine
Luthe

Keith Moilanen
Born: 10/80 Died: 5/19
Mother: Jill Moilanen

Natalie Rose Nevarez
Born: 5/90 Died: 11/14
Parents: Gregg and
Alison Nevarez

Dominic Pennington
Roque
Born: 8/02 Died: 9/09
Parents: Kerrie & Ren
Roque

John Paul Mc Nicholas
Born: 12/89 Died: 11/20
Parents: John & Leeann
Mc Nicholas

Matthew Anthony Molina
Born: 9/97 Died: 11/25
Mother: Mayra Carreva

Richard Paul Negrete
Born: 6/43 Died: 2/04
Mother: Sally Negrete

Lindsay Nicole Pollack
Born: 6/94 Died: 11/23
Mother: Daphne Carroll-
Pollack

John Paul Mc Nicholas
Born: 12/89 Died: 11/20
Parents: John & Leeann
Mc Nicholas

Reyna Joanne Monje
Born 9/98 Died: 4/21
Mother: Debbie Trutanich

Stephanie Sue Newkirk
Born: 12/67 Died:
10/15
Mother: Cindy McCoy

Donnie Vincent Pulislich
Born: 1/75 Died: 1/18
Mother: Maria Pulislich
Sister: Michelle Pulislich

Kirk Nicholas Mc Nulty
Born: 7/84 Died: 2/14
Mother: Elaine Mc Nulty

Jacki Montoya
Born: 10/89 Died: 6/15
Mother: Theresa
Montoya

Trevor Mitchell Nicholson
Born: 7/99 Died: 1/18
Parents: Brad & Kendra
Nicholson

Shannon Quigley
Born: 12/68 Died: 1/09
Mother: Kathleen
Shortridge

Jeremy Stewert Mead
Born: 10/61 Died: 11/14
Mother: Carol Mead

Joshua Montoya
Born: 4/15 Died: 6/15
Grandmother: Theresa
Montoya

Steven Scott Nussbaum
Born: 5/61 Died: 11/15
Parents: Will & Gloria
Nussbaum

Dax Jordan Quintana
Dantas De Oliveria
Born: 6/17 Died: 8/17
Parents: Alexandar &
Sanderson Quintana
Dantas De Oliveria

Robert Andrew Mead
Born: 5/65 Died: 4/11
Mother: Carol Mead

Danielle Ann Mosher
Born: 8/78 Died: 6/97
Parents: Paul & Rose
Mary Mosher

Sally Anne O'Connor
Born: 12/62 Died: 2/11
Mother: Grace "Darline"
Dye

Daniel Paul Rains
Born: 4/72 Died: 3/91
Mother: Janet Ferjo

Nicole Marie Megaloudis
Born: 10/84 Died: 2/04
Mother: Gail Megaloudis-
Rongen

Benjamin A. Moutes
Born: 3/07 Died: 5/10
Parents: Kevin & Claudia
Moutes

Isabella Ofsanko
Born: 6/97 Died: 10/15
Mother: Desireé Palmer

Jeffrey Alan Rakus
Born: 10/86 Died: 7/06
Parents: Tony & Donna
Rakus

Damion Mendoza
Born: 7/76 Died: 6/92
Parents: Carlene & Paul
Mendoza

Danielle Murillo
Born: 5/96 Died: 4/14
Parents: Cheryl Outlaw &
Manuel Murillo

Dominique Oliver
Born: 5/85 Died: 3/02
Mother: Cheryl Stephens

Christopher Metsker
Born: 11/94 Died: 3/18
Parents: Justin & Tara
Metsker

Christopher Murphy
Born: 11/92 Died: 4/18
Mother: Deborah Murphy

Steven Thomas Pack
Born: 8/91 Died: 3/20
Parents: Tom & Lisa
Pack

Lisandro Ramirez
Born: 9/93 Died: 3/24
Parents: Michael & Ana
Mills

Christopher Myers
Born: 10/86 Died: 5/06
Parents: Janet & Larry
Myers

Lilly Parker
Born: 12/15 Died: 1/17
Mother: Nicole Kawagish
Father: J.D. Parker

Leo Joshua Rank II
Born: 3/11 Died: 4/12
Parents: Roberta Redner
& Leo Rank

**Our Children**

Cindy Ranftl
Born: 8/68 Died: 7/97
Parents: Pat & Bob
Ranftl

David Reade
Born: 4/72 Died: 9/23
Brother of Bobby Reade

Ronald Reade II
Born: 9/69 to 8/23
Brother of Bobby Reade

Sarah Lynne Redding
Born: 12/80 Died: 12/05
Mother: Linda Redding

Aaron Rico
Born: 12/89 Died: 12/10
Parents: Cameron &
Annette Rico

John Patrick Rouse
Born: 1/78 Died: 7/02
Mother: Sharon Rouse

Danny Ryan
Born: 07/79 Died: 10/15
Parents: Mike & Andrea
Ryan

Andrew Patrick Sakura
Born: 3/90 Died: 3/08
Parents: Bruce & Karen
Sakura

Daniela Mora Saldana
Born: 3/17 Died: 3/17
Mother: Rosa Saldana

Lisa Sandoval
Born: 9/76 Died: 12/92
Parents: Susan & Ruben
Sandoval

Phillip Ruben Sandoval
Born: 7/84 - Died: 6/16
Parents: Valerie & Joe
Desjardin

Andrew Sankus
Born: 4/71 Died: 8/15
Mother: Mary Sankus

Christian Saylor
Born: 10/90 Died: 10/24
Parents: Jeff & Coco
Saylor

Gerald Slater
Born: 2/71 Died: 8/94
Parents: Bob & Gwen
Slater

Spencer Simpson
Born: 1/80 Died: 6/13
Parents: Rich & Shelly
Simpson

Nicholas M Sinclair
Born: 1/80 Died: 2/22
Mother: Suzanne
Sinclair

Paul Slater
Born: 10/71 Died: 11/16
Parents: Bob & Gwen
Slater

Dale Lee Soto
Born: 7/94 Died: 5/11
Mother: Monique Soto

Patrik Stezinger
Born: 1/89 Died: 8/17
Parents: Paul &
Rosemary Mosher

Jonathan David
Streisand
Born: 1/87 Died: 8/13
Parents: Pricilla & David
Streisand

Brittany Anne Suggs
Born: 10/88 Died: 4/16
Mother Camille Suggs

Elizabeth D. Szucs
Born: 4/72 Died: 6/11
Parents: Dolores & Frank
Szucs

Kenneth Tahan
Born: 2/66 Died: 7/16
Parents: Shirley &
Joseph Tahan

Remembered

Anthony Tanori
Born: 8/82 Died: 8/12
Parents: Chuck & Sylvia
Tanori

Jamie Taus
Born: 5/85 Died: 5/21
Sister: Jackie Taus
Mother: Susan Taus

Jacqueline Marie Taylor
Born: 1/83 Died: 7/11
Mother Jennifer Flynn

Julie Catherine Thomas
Born: 1/80 Died: 9/2023
Mother: Mary Thomas

Ryan William Thomas
Born: 2/82 Died: 4/04
Mother: Linda Thomas

Michael D. Toomey
Born: 4/62 Died: 2/05
Parents: Michael &
Elizabeth Toomey

Catarina Sol Torres
Born: 12/16 Died: 12/16
Parents: Marcus &
Vanessa Torres

Carlos Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 1/12
Parents: Antonia &
Refugio Valdez

Vance C. Valdez
Born: 10/90 Died: 3/12
Parents: Carlos & Maria
Valdez

Lexi Noelle Valladares
Born: 4/04 Died: 7/10
Parents: Fausto & Erica
Valladares

Manuel Vargas III
Born: 3/95 - Died: 5/15
Father: Manuel Vargas

Mark T. Vasquez
Born: 5/75 Died: 5/11
Parents: Manuel &
Blanca Vasquez Jr.

David Michael Villarreal
Born: 11/90 Died: 2/18
Parents: David & Barbara
Villarreal

Eric Douglas Vines
Born: 7/77 Died: 7/91
Parents: Doug & Lynn
Vines

Adam Michael Wechsler
Born: 3/2003 Died: 11/23
Father: Zach Wechsler

Matthew L. Weiss
Born: 9/96 Died: 8/18
Mother: Natalie
Narumoto

Rennie S. Wible
Born: 8/66 Died: 1/18
Mother: Jinx Wible

Dovan Vincent Wing
Born: 6/83 Died: 9/17
Mother: Becky Wing

For corrections or to add
you child to the Our
Children Remembered
section call (310)963-
4646 and leave a
message.

Birthday/Anniversary Tributes... If it's your child's birthday month, we invite you to join our monthly meeting and share their story! Birthdays hold treasured memories and are especially difficult for surviving parents and siblings. TCF offers a wonderful venue to honor and celebrate the precious life— a story of your loved one. Taking a few minutes to share a picture, memento, award or even their favorite toy is a gentle reminder to all that our love continues.

In honor of your child's birthday or anniversary, we welcome you to submit a tribute. Birthday and Anniversary tributes show how important our children still are to all of us. Though your child is no longer here to buy a present for, think of this as a present about your child. This tribute is an opportunity to share your child with us all. (We thank you for any birthday or anniversary donations that help offset chapter expenses.)

**Birthday Tribute:
Alex J. Mantyla
Mar. 1989 - Aug. 2008**



Happy Birthday, Alex!

It's very hard to believe you would be turning 37 this year! We can still picture you riding your "Big Wheels" up and down the sidewalk or running in the sand to catch a wave with your dad. We still smile at your excitement of going to your first school dance. Then suddenly you were in college. How did that happen so quickly?

Sometimes it's very hard to think that all we have left of you are memories. Most of the time, though, we are just so grateful to have so many happy memories of you and the times we spent together. Yes, we struggle with our grief, some days more than others. We are comforted, though, when we think about the great life you had and the joy you gave to so many.

In your 19 years, you were everything and more that we could have ever wanted in a son. We feel your presence always. Thanks for watching over us.

Love, Mom and Dad

By Siblings...



**The Loss of a Sibling from
My Point of View**

I am Chris' sister. My name is Sara. For many years growing up all my older brothers friends called me was Chris' sister. I didn't mind it then because being the little sister I was just happy to be noticed by them. Now if someone refers to me as Chris sister it warms my heart. It means they remember him and realize that even though he is gone I am, and always will be, his sister. Chris was my only sibling. It's really hard to be the only remaining child when your parents have experienced that kind of loss. I love my parents deeply and because of that I try so hard to bring some sunshine to the days I feel will be the hardest for them. I try to spend as much time as I can with them because I am so much more aware of what the loss feels like. I worry now about losing them because I always thought I would still have my brother and the thought that it will be just me and whether or not I will be able to handle it on my own is terrifying. I always imagined growing up and having barbecues with my family, my brothers family, and my parents. I thought there would be family vacations, holidays, graduations, celebrations, and just more time.

My children never got to meet their uncle and that breaks my heart. I can tell them how hilarious he was but they will never really know. I want so badly to make them understand how important they are to each other and I try to tell them but I just can't put into the words the impact they will have on each other's lives. Because the loss of a sibling leaves a hole that's impossible to describe.
-- SW Florida Chapter of TCF

My Forever Brother

When I was 20 years old, I was awakened in the middle of the night to the terrible news that my only brother, Scott, and my cousin, Matthew, had been killed together in a car accident. It seemed inconceivable that my 17-year-old-brother was dead. My brother, whom I had grown up with, shared a history with and expected to grow old with, was suddenly gone forever from my life. Scott had unruly blond curls and bright green eyes. He was very athletic, devoured Twix candy bars, chewed cinnamon gum, was a NY Jets fan, and

loved playing jokes.

I envisioned us attending each other's college graduations and weddings, raising our kids together, and growing old together. Scott's death turned my world upside down and put into question everything I ever believed. Early on the pain was so great, I honestly thought I would die of a broken heart. People said things to me that were not helpful: "Well, at least he didn't suffer," "At least it was quick," and "At least you have sisters."

As I struggled through my own grief, I also worried a lot about my parents and felt the need to "be strong" for them. I often hid my grief from them, and grieved alone, so as not to cause them further pain. I felt guilty for having my own grief because my parents had lost a child.

As I went through my grief journey, I looked to others further along in the grief process for guidance and strength. The journey was bumpy; I had no roadmap. Grief came in choppy, unpredictable waves, not neat, organized stages. Well-meaning people told me that I would eventually get over it, and find closure. These concepts were not comforting and did not make sense.

I didn't want to "get over" Scott. To "get over" him felt somehow like I was erasing him from my life. I am the person I am today because Scott was in my life. To deny him would be to deny an important part of myself. The reality is that we don't forget, move on, and have closure; but rather we honor, remember, and incorporate our deceased brother and sister into our lives in a new way.

With time and support, I went on to transform my life and create a "new normal." I have found meaning, purpose, and joy helping others who have suffered a loss, and I have met many wonderful and caring people through The Compassionate Friends. Today, I keep my brother's memory alive through the stories I share with others. Although it has been 30 years, my brother continues to live forever in my heart. He is my guiding light, and although I am poorer for having lost him, I am so much richer forever having known him. He will always play an important role in my life, and he remains forever my brother.
—Heidi Horsley Dr. Heidi Horsley is a grief expert and the Executive Director and Co-Founder of Open to Hope, an international organization committed to providing hope.

For Grandparents...

Becoming Melancholy: How My Grandson's Death Changed the Way I Live

Posted on September 24th, 2024



I continue to learn and grow as this new person I have become, a griever making my re-entry back into life among those untouched by loss. In adjusting to the new me, I have come to accept things about myself that at first I assumed were temporary. I now know that I am permanently changed.

Self-awareness is a good thing. If grief has provided anything positive, it would be the soul-searching that I needed to do in order to overcome my loss. Grief shatters you, tears you apart. Rips open your soul, breaks your heart and forces you to open your eyes. When I was able to put myself back together, I found my perception of everything had been completely altered.

Grief makes you aware, hyper-aware. You become more of who you really are and you see the truth of who others are as well.

In this new state of being I tend to over-analyze everything. Not to be weighed as right or wrong or to judge, but to prevent the mental unrest that may unintentionally harm my fragile psyche.

I find myself living a life mostly melancholy. Although I have consistently tried to resume an overtly happy life, I now realize this was also misguided. There is absolutely nothing wrong with living my life the way I am. It is not a dishonor to Konnor to be sad at times. I am, in fact, honoring him when I have moments of sadness because I am expressing my love for him. To continue to falsely create a facade of a life that does not exist would be a mockery.

I am doing much better than I was. I am, for the most part, happier now. I can laugh when something is funny. I smile more. For this I feel proud considering where I was two years ago. I am settling into myself, content in who I am. Shaped by grief but surviving by my love for my family and everything that is left in the here and now.

Grieving and feeling melancholy has turned me into a deeply emotional human being. Some handle loss well and manage to go unscathed. For me, the changes I have felt within myself are irrevocable. I am emotional. I am aware. I am more alive now having experienced the trauma of death.

I am blessed to experience a sunrise, my

grandchildren, a beautiful song. It doesn't bother me to feel everything so deeply. So what if I cry more than the average person. I get melancholy. I know what it means to lose someone I treasured and thought so beautiful.

Being melancholy does not mean I am depressed or sad. It is not a mood. It is a state of being. It is loving your family more. It is recognizing beauty unnoticed before. It is hearing a song and crying because it brings forth a memory whether good or bad. It is a feeling of stillness, fullness while at the same time experiencing emptiness, numbness. Melancholy is staring off into space, lost in your own thoughts in a room full of people. It's that lump in your throat and the ache in your chest.

I have adjusted to the overwhelming emotions I can experience. I am comfortable with who I have become. Truth be told, I would rather feel so much more than care less in a world that at times can seem so cold.

--Patricia Mealer Grandmother to Konnor Mason, who passed suddenly November 22, 2015, at eight years old

From Our Members...

Healing After Loss



She thought that she had never before had a chance to realize the strength that human beings have, to endure; she loved and revered all those who had ever suffered, even those who had failed to endure.

It is true that grief extends our sensibilities. We find we have a sudden kinship with those who have suffered losses similar to ours. We may, like the woman in Agee's story who had been recently widowed, find ourselves in awe of the strength in ourselves to simply go on living in the face of such suffering. We realize how much we have been spared, not to have encountered this kind of grief before, and our hearts go out to those who are young and sustain a major grief too soon, before they have had carefree years to treasure.

All of this comes as a kind of astonishment in the first period of grief. Like our plunging into cold water, it takes our breath away. The shock alters all our perceptions. Then we get used to it. Our bodies warm to it and we begin to swim.

--by Martha Whitmore Hickman

National Compassionate Friends Conference...

We are very pleased to announce The Compassionate Friends (TCF) 49th Annual National Conference in Baltimore, MD! TCF's National Conference is an enriching and supportive event for many newer and long-time bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Attendees come and find renewed hope and support, as well as strategies for coping with grief. Participants create friendships with other bereaved people who truly understand the heartbreaking loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild. Lifelong friendships are often formed and rekindled each year at TCF conferences.

Register now! Don't miss our special introductory registration rate of \$245 available through **March 16, 2026**. This is a savings of \$75 off of the regular registration rate.

Also, we are thankful to Visit Baltimore and the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel for providing a rebate that we are passing along to our attendees. To receive an additional \$5 off the conference registration, use the discount code WLBT49 on the payment page.

Register Now Open!

For more information and to register, visit:

<https://cvent.me/Wa5GoW>

Grandparents: The National Conference in Baltimore is for you also. There will be workshops specifically for you there and a Sharing Session for those with visitation issues. It will be a time when you can perhaps connect with other grandparents and share experiences or frustrations.

Your role is so complicated from my point of view. You are grieving that precious grandchild and you are watching your own child suffer and you can't do anything about either of these situations. The heartache you feel, the eggshells you at times walk on and the grief that only another grieving grandparent can understand.

Welcome New Members... We welcome our new members to our chapter of TCF. We're sorry you have a need to be with us, but we hope you feel you have found a safe place to share your grief and will return. It often takes a few meetings to feel at ease in a group setting. Please try attending three meetings before deciding if TCF is for you. Each meeting is different, the people and topics change and need to talk or share fluctuates between each meeting. The next one might be the one that really helps. We encourage you to take

advantage of our resources. We have a well stocked library of grief materials, a phone friend committee that welcomes calls at any time, and a members' directory to call another parent you have met at the meetings.



Flash Zoom Meetings... are called on short notice, and are of shorter duration than in-person meetings. The intent is to check in on each other and share, nothing more. The goal is to meet weekly but if it occurs every other week that's ok. To participate in our Zoom meetings, contact Leo at (310) 283-6739 or Liccia79@gmail.com for the link.

Birthday Table... In the month of your child's birthday, a Birthday Table is provided where you can share photos, mementos, your child's favorite snack, a birthday cake, a bouquet of flowers or anything you'd like to bring to share. We want to know your child better, so please take advantage of this opportunity to celebrate the wonderful day of your child's birth. This is your chance to tell us a favorite story, or whatever remembrance you choose, in memory of your child. Our child's, grandchild's, or sibling's birthday will forever be a very special day and we at TCF know how important that day is and how helpful and healing it can be to share with others. Please plan on attending the meeting of your child's birthday month and filling our Birthday Table with pictures and/or mementos.

Newsletter Birthday & Anniversary Tributes ...

During your child's birthday month, you may place a picture and either a short personal message, poem, or story about your child in the newsletter. (Less than 200 words, please.) Do not cut your picture. We will block off unused areas. If it is a group photo, identify the person to be cropped. This tribute is an opportunity to tell a short story about your child, so we will be able to know them better. Photos must have identification on the back. Enclose a SASE in order for photos to be returned by mail. (Please do not send your only picture.) You can mail them to the P.O. Box or send them by e-mail to Lynntcf@aol.com Tributes must be in by the 1st of the month **preceding** your child's birthday month or at the prior meeting. (Example: April first for May Birthdays). If you miss the deadline, call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 and let me know. I will try to fit

them in. Otherwise they will appear in the following month's issue.



Get Your Photo Buttons... Photo Buttons are a perfect way to share your child, grandchild or sibling with others at our monthly meetings. If you would like to have some made, call Connie at (310) 292-5381. You can mail her a photo for each button you would like (color photo copies work great) and she can make them for you. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed. Keep in mind that the button is about 3" in diameter, so the picture needs to fit inside that area and the actual photo is used, so make sure it's one we can cut.

Memory Book... Our chapter has an ongoing Memory Book that is on display at each meeting. Each child is given a page in the book. Blank pages are located in the back of the book. Feel free to take a page home to work on. Pictures, poems, or a tribute you choose that will help us to remember your child can be included. Feel free to add your picture to the Memory Book at any of our meetings. This is one way we can meet and remember the new member's children.

Library Information... At each meeting we have a library table. It is on the honor system. You may borrow a book and can bring it back at the next meeting. Many of you have books you got when you were newly bereaved and may no longer need. Perhaps you would like to donate books on grief that you found helpful. If you wish to donate a book to our library, please let Lori know so we can put your child's name on a donation label inside the book.

We also welcome "book reviews". If you have read a book which was helpful on your grief journey, please let us know. Send book reviews and other articles or poems for submission to the newsletter to Lynntcf@aol.com Also, a friendly reminder, if you have books at home you have checked out and are finished reading them, please remember to return them to our library.

Thank You... Thank you to all those who donate to our meeting basket or send donations to our chapter. Since there are no fees or dues to belong to TCF, it is only your donations that keep us functioning, and we appreciate your help. A



receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes if you include your name. Please let us know if you want the tribute published in the next newsletter.

Our Website... Leo Licciardone is hosting the website and updating it with the current newsletter and chapter information. Thank you to those who are willing to get your newsletter online. To be able to send a reminder each month to let you know when the latest issue of the newsletter is available, we need your e-mail address. If you have not been getting a reminder e-mail, please let me know. To update our files, please call Lynn at (310) 963-4646 to update by phone. You can also e-mail Lynn at Lynntcf@aol.com if you want to do it electronically. Thank-you for your understanding and help. TCF South Bay/LA

Phone Friends... Sometimes you want or need to talk about the life and death of your child, sibling or grandchild with someone that someone that understands and can share your pain. The following friends are on the telephone committee, and are available to talk when ever you need someone who understands.



Leo & Connie Licciardone (chpt. leaders)...(310) 292-5381
 Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla (chpt. Leaders)...(310) 530-8489
 Lori Galloway.....(760) 521-0096
 Linda Zelik.....(310) 648-4878

Local TCF Chapters:

Beach Cities/L.A. (Manhattan Bch): (970) 213-6293 Third Tue.

Los Angeles: (310) 474-3407 1st Thurs.

Newport Beach (917) 703-3414 3rd Wed.

Orange Coast/Irvine: (949) 552-2800 1st Wed.

Orange Co./Anaheim: (562) 943-2269

Pomona/San Gabriel: (626) 919-7206

Redlands: (800) 717-0373 3rd Tues.

Riverside-Inland Empire: (909) 683-4160

San Fernando Valley: (818) 788-9701 2nd Mon.

South Los Angeles: (323) 546-9755 last Tue

Ventura Co. TCF: (805)981-1573 1&3 Thurs.

Verdugo Hills: (818) 236-3635, 4th Thurs.

Local Support Groups...

Family & Friends of Murder Victims: Rose Madsen, (909) 798-4803 Newsletter and support group, e-mail Roseydoll@aol.com

Alive Alone: For parents who have lost their only child, or all their children. 1112 Champaign Dr.,

Van Wert, OH 45891 Newsletter available.

www.Alivealone.org

Survivors of Suicide: Support Group for families that have lost someone to suicide. Contact Rick Mogil (310) 895-2326 or 24 hrs: (310) 391-1253

Our House/Bereavement House: Support groups in LA & So. Bay (310) 475-0299 Also Spanish Support Group, Loren Delgado 310-231-3196.

Pathways Hospice: Bereavement support and sibling group. Bill Hoy (562) 531-3031

New Hope Grief Support Community: Grief support and education groups for adults and children. Long Beach, CA 90808, (562) 429-0075

Providence Trinity Care Hospice and the Gathering Place: Various bereavement support groups including support for loss of a child, support group for children 5-8, 9-12, and teens. (310) 546-6407

Torrance Memorial Bereavement Services: (310) 325-9110 Weekly grief support.

The Lazarus Circle: Monthly grief support. Meets third Thurs of each month, 6-7;15 at First Lutheran Church, 2900 W. Carson St. Torrance

Share Pregnancy & Infant Loss: (800) 821-6819

Walk with Sally: Cancer loss bereavement & art therapy for children. (310) 378-5843

Camp Comfort Zone: Year round Bereavement Camp for Children www.comfortzonecamp.org (310) 483-8313.

Other Grief Support Websites...

thetearsfoundation.org

childloss.com

goodgriefresources.com

griefwatch.dom

bereavedparentsusa.org

opentohope.com

healingafterloss.org

webhealing.com

survivorsofsuicide.com

alivealone.org

taps.org (military death)

angelmoms.com

save.org (suicide/depression)

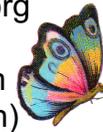
M.A.D.D..org

pomc.com (families of murder victims)

grasphelp.org (substance abuse deaths)

www.facebook.com/TheUglyShoesClub (Suicide)

Griefwords.com (for grandparents)



A Special Thanks to The Neighborhood Church for the use of their facilities for our meetings.

Chapter Officers:

CHAPTER CO-LEADERS: Leo & Connie Licciardone and Jarmo & Bonnie Mantoya
 CHAPTER ZOOM HOSTS: Connie & Leo Licciardone

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Lynn Vines

PROOFREADER: Sandra Myricks

TREASURER: Kristy Mueller

WEBSITE: Leo Licciardone

Steering Committee Members:

Linda & Joe Zelik

Marilyn Nemeth

Bill Matasso

Nancy Lerner

Connie & Leo Licciardone

Sandra & Eddie Myricks

Jarmo & Bonnie Mantyla



Lori Galloway

Crystal Henning

Lynn Vines

Kristy Mueller

Kitty Edler

Susan Kass

National Office Information: Compassionate Friends E-Newsletter: TCF National Office publishes a monthly e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on what's going on with the organization and its chapters. We encourage everyone use the valuable information it holds to help you in your grief. To receive TCF's e-newsletter, sign up for it online by visiting TCF national website at <http://compassionatefriends.org>. and filling out the request to sign-up at the bottom of the page.

The National Office of TCF... has an ongoing support group for parents and siblings online. For a complete schedule and to register for Online Support, visit <http://compassionatefriends.org> and follow the directions to register.

Online Support (Live Chat)... TCF offers "virtual chapters" through an Online Support Community (live chats). This program was established to encourage connecting and sharing among parents, grandparents, and siblings (over the age of 18) grieving the death of a child. The rooms supply support, encouragement, and friendship. The friendly atmosphere encourages conversation among friends; friends who understand the emotions you're experiencing. There are general bereavement sessions as well as more specific sessions. Please Note: Times posted on the schedule are based on Pacific Time. Select "enter room" under the chat room you would like to participate in and you will be prompted to register. Once registered you will be able to log-in with your username and password that you have set up. You can keep abreast of any changes by going to: www.compassionatefriends.org

FOUR OPTIONS TO GIVE

- CASH (Meetings only)
- QR Code via cell phone
- Online at: tcfsbla.org/donate-now/
- Checks by mail :

The Compassionate Friends South Bay/LA.

P.O. Box 11171

Torrance, CA 90510-1171

- Include note with child's name and donor information



SCAN ME

Image Credit: Anant Rohankar

"Do not judge the bereaved parent. They come in many forms. They are breathing, but they are dying. They may look young, but inside they have become ancient. They smile, but their hearts sob. They walk, they talk, they cook, they clean, they work, they ARE, but they ARE NOT, all at once. They are here, but part of them is elsewhere for eternity."

~Unknown

Facebook/F♥tprints On Our Hearts



DONATIONS TO THE SOUTH BAY/L.A. CHAPTER



OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

The Compassionate Friends is a totally self-supporting organization. Our chapter is run entirely by volunteers, but we do have operating costs. Your tax deductible donation is what keeps our chapter going. **In honor and in remembrance of you child, please consider a donation to our chapter.**

No donations were received this month. Please consider supporting our chapter.

With sincere gratitude and deep appreciation, we acknowledge the generosity of the previous individuals and companies. Your tax deductible donation, given, in memory of your loved one enables us to reach bereaved parents with telephone calls and information, and they also help defray newsletter and mailing costs. Please help us reach out to others in this difficult time. Indicate any special tribute you wish printed in our newsletter.

**When making a donation, please make checks payable to:
The Compassionate Friends South Bay/L.A. Chpt.
Mail to: The Compassionate Friends So Bay/ L.A. Chapter
P.O. Box 11171, Torrance, CA 90510-1171**

In loving memory of _____ Birth date _____ Death date _____

Tribute _____

We are always working a month in advance. To include your donation in the next newsletter we must receive it by the first of the month, otherwise it will appear in the following issue.

The Compassionate Friends
South Bay/L.A., CA Chapter
P.O. Box 11171
Torrance, CA 90510



March 2026

Time Sensitive Material, Please Deliver Promptly



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope.
The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes,
but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain,
just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.
We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships.

We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief,
but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful
that they feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength,
while some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression,
while others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,
it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other
our love for the children who have died.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love
to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith
as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

WE NEED NOT WALK ALONE. WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

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If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, need corrections, or have
a new address, please contact us.